

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 063935
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R 132127Z MAR 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PDIP, UR

SUBJECT: TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

REF: USUN 0822

1. WHILE WE DEFER TO EMBASSY MOSCOW FOR FULL COMMENT ON
FIRYUBIN'S REMARKS, OUR VIEW OF CURRENT TRAVEL SITUATION
IS AS FOLLOWS:

--NEW SOVIET TRAVEL REGULATIONS ISSUED IN JANUARY DID
PROVIDE FOR OPENING OF A NUMBER OF NEW CITIES AND AREAS
WHICH HAD FORMERLY BEEN CLOSED.

--SEVERAL NEW AREAS OF MOSCOW OBLAST WERE OPENED TO NOTE-
FREE TRAVEL.

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--SOME AREAS IN SOVIET FAR EAST AND CENTRAL ASIA WERE
OPENED BUT MOST OF THESE REMAIN INACCESSIBLE TO TRAVEL.
THERE IS SIMPLY NO WAY TO GET TO TH:M.

--OTHER AREAS, PREVIOUSLY TEMPORARILY CLOSED -- E.G.,

CHINESE BORDER AREA -- HAVE NOW BEEN FORMALLY CLOSED.

--EMBASSY MOSCOW HAS BEEN TESTING NEW TRAVEL REGULATIONS BY APPLYING TO TRAVEL TO NEWLY OPENED CITIES OUTSIDE MOSCOW OBLAST. TO OUR KNOWLEDGE EMBASSY HAS BEEN INFORMED IN EACH CASE THAT CITY IS CLOSED "FOR REASONS OF A TEMPORARY NATURE." PRACTICAL EFFECT OF "LIBERALIZED" TRAVEL CONTROLS HAS, THEREFORE, BEEN SLIGHT.

2. DEPARTMENT'S APPROACH IS TO TAKE POSTIVE RECIPROCAL ACTION IN TRAVEL AREA, IF IN FACT NEW SOVIET REGULATIONS CAN BE SHOWN TO HAVE RESULTED IN INCREASED TRAVEL OPPORTUNITIES FOR AMERICANS IN USSR. THUS FAR, THIS HAS NOT BEEN DEMONSTRATED. WE WILL BE WATCHING FOR SIGNS OF MORE POSITIVE SOVIET APPROACH AS EMBASSY AND CONGEN CONTINUE TO TEST SOVIET INTENTIONS.

3. DEPARTMENT IS POUCHING TO USUN COPIES OF RECENT EMBASSY MOSCOW REPORTING CABLES, AS WELL AS BACKGROUND MATERIAL.

4. EMBASSY AND CONGEN REQUESTED TO ADD USUN AS INFO ADDRESSEE ON FUTURE CABLES ON THIS SUBJECT. VANCE

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